

CHILDREN & DISASTERS NEWSLETTER



FEMA



April 2017

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4 Days Left: Apply for FEMA's Youth Preparedness Council



Time is running out! Applications for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) [Youth Preparedness Council](#) (YPC) close on April 7.

Youth across the Nation have the opportunity to make a difference and transform the resilience and preparedness of their communities and beyond. Students in 8th–11th grades who have engaged in community service or are interested in emergency preparedness are encouraged to apply.

Are you an adult working with youth or emergency management? Share [the application](#) with youth who might be interested in applying. Applicants must submit a completed application form, two letters of recommendation, and academic records. However, applicants may submit their letters of recommendation and academic records after the deadline if they are unable to get them by the 7th.

[Applications](#) are due no later than April 7, 2017.

FROM THE FIELD

Q&A: From Weather Camp to the Green Screen

Kaiti Blake is a meteorologist with KTAB-TV in Abilene, Texas. Kaiti spent her summer vacation during third and fourth grades at The Weather Research Center's Weather Camp. She shared her experiences, how weather camp inspired her career, and advice for young people considering a career in the meteorology field in a question and answer session below.

Q: What first inspired you to attend the weather summer camps?

"I had always been fascinated by the weather. I think it had a lot to do with growing up in Houston. My parents and I lived with my grandparents while I was growing up. Anytime a tropical system was

in the Gulf of Mexico, my grandma would pull out her hurricane tracking map—the kind you can get in the annual hurricane season brochures from your local news station. She and my grandpa would watch the local meteorologists each day to get the latest storm coordinates and plot them on the map. They were really observant and educated when it came to being prepared for tropical storms and hurricanes. I think growing up in that environment stirred my curiosity. I really owe my time at weather camp to my parents. They stumbled upon it, and—knowing how much the weather interested me—signed me up.”



Kaiti's time at weather camp inspired her to become a meteorologist. She now works for KTAB-TV in Abilene, TX.

Q: What about these camps made you want to pursue a career as a meteorologist?

“I remember thinking while at camp, ‘Wow, there’s A LOT to learn about the weather.’ I knew, even then, that this science was one in which I would never stop learning and growing. Today, that couldn’t be truer. I am fascinated by weather every day, and always say that I’m humbled by meteorology. You can rely on the best forecasting tools and models, but, in the end, Mother Nature is in control.”

Q: What is the most rewarding part about being a meteorologist?

The most rewarding part, by far, is hearing from viewers. I don’t do this for me. Sure—I am a big weather nerd! I love being able to pour myself into my forecast every day. However, what’s more important to me is that the people that see my forecasts get something out of it. Whether that’s just knowing that they need a jacket or that there is a tornado coming their way...my goal is to have everyone informed.

Q: What advice do you have for students looking to pursue a career in weather or meteorology?

“Start surrounding yourself with all things weather as soon as possible! Whether you think you want to work in broadcasting, go the operational route, or even work in the private sector, immerse yourself in meteorology literature and media. Follow and engage with professional meteorologists on social media. Read a lot of books, listen to podcasts, and even watch old weather coverage on YouTube. (That last one is my favorite pastime!) Be as big of a ‘weather nerd’ as you can ... You’ll be glad you got started sooner rather than later.”

Want to know more? Connect with Kaiti on Twitter at [@KaitiBlakeKTAB](https://twitter.com/KaitiBlakeKTAB).

National Weather Service Celebrates Groundhog Day



Students create their own thunder with the Thunder Drum.

In February, National Weather Service (NWS) representatives from the Pittsburgh Weather Forecast Office and the Office of Communications visited Marlene Lellock, Director of the Punxsutawney Weather Discovery Center (PWDC) to help commemorate the 131st anniversary of Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney, PA.

Lellock and Amanda Homack, PWDC’s Director of Education, took the group on a tour of the PWDC. The facility houses a tornado slide,

Velcro weather wall, interactive cloud exhibit, weather maze table, and a simulated radiosonde balloon. The PWDC also has several animal folklore exhibits that show how farmers have historically observed animal behavior to help them understand the changes in the weather.

At the end of their visit, NWS staff participated in the 131st Anniversary of Groundhog Day at Gobbler's Knob, where fifteen thousand excited visitors witnessed Punxsutawney Phil's prediction that winter would last for six more weeks.

Click [here](#) to learn about upcoming NWS events, like the Storm Spotter Training Class, which will be held on April 27, 2017, and the Weather Summer Camp Programs, which are slated for July 12–28, 2017.



Another popular PWDC exhibit is the Ready or Not: Weather Emergency Shelter. Parents and children walk into a shelter room, where they learn how to prepare emergency supply kits for home and school.

Blue Room Helps to Restore Calm



The Red Cross' Blue Room is a portable cardboard room designed to soothe the over-stimulated senses of people with Autism and other developmental or neurological disorders.

April is National Autism Awareness Month, and organizations across the Nation are incorporating emergency preparedness for those with Autism and other special needs into their plans. Through the American Red Cross, Office of Disability Integration, the first [Blue Room](#) was made available at the River Center shelter in Baton Rouge, LA. A Blue Room is a portable cardboard room designed to soothe the over-stimulated senses of people with Autism and other developmental or

neurological disorders.

The room successfully helps children with Autism cope with disaster. During the most recent flooding in Baton Rouge, 2-year-old Azzie and his mother Keeira went to the shelter for help. When introduced to the Blue Room, Azzie was immediately calmed. He soon began playing and acting with affection toward his mother and the shelter staff.

"I am thrilled to have been able to help navigate the process," said Terry Freeman, an American Red Cross Disability Integration specialist who helped with the project in Baton Rouge. "The sensory gym is one part of many new initiatives of Red Cross Disability Integration, whose purpose is to support people with access and functional needs. It is our hope to see more of these gyms in future disaster relief operations."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Get Severe Weather Alerts



Do you know when a tornado is coming? Did you know it is possible to get real-time alerts and warnings ahead of time? [Click here](#) to sign up for alerts and prepare for when severe weather strikes.

Protect Your Critical Documents



Don't lose your memories to severe weather. Take steps to safeguard your critical documents and be safe during tornado threats. [Click here](#) to download a checklist today to help you get started!

Celebrate Safe Kids Day in D.C.

On **Saturday, May 6, 2017**, Safe Kids D.C. will celebrate Safe Kids Day at Union Temple Baptist Church's parking lot, located at 1225 W Street S.E. Washington, D.C. 20020 at 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

The fun-filled event will bring together first responders, local businesses, civic groups, and local health and safety professionals to teach families how to keep local children safe. More than 150 communities across the U.S. are hosting similar Safe Kids Day activities this spring—join Safe Kids D.C. or find an event near you. For more information, call 202-476-4465 or email Rjeffers@Childrensnational.org.



RESOURCES

Autism Awareness Month Resources

Topics: General preparedness, Health, Medical

Description: These resources focus on emergency preparedness measures for those with Autism or other access and functional needs.

- Autism Society: [Disaster Preparedness Tips for Families Affected by Autism](#)
- Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center: [Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)
- Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities: [Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Emergency Planning Resources](#)

Develop School Emergency Operations Plans

Organization: U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and FEMA

Website: http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_K-12_Guide_508.pdf

Audience: School administrators

Topics: General preparedness, Health, Medical

Description: This guide helps schools take steps to keep students safe and plan for emergencies through the creation of a school Emergency Operations Plan.

Twitter Accounts to Follow for Preparedness Updates

Audience: All ages

Topics: General preparedness

Description: These Twitter accounts will help you stay up to date on the latest emergency preparedness news and information.

- [@FEMA](#) (FEMA): The official FEMA Twitter account that shares news before, during, and after emergencies
- [@NWS](#) (National Weather Service): This is the official Twitter account for the National Weather Service, which shares the latest weather news and updates
- [@Readygov](#) (FEMA): This account shares important emergency preparedness information
- [@Prepareathon](#) (FEMA): Follow for updates and information on how to increase emergency preparedness and resilience
- [@remstacenter](#) (Department of Education, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools): The REMS TA Center Twitter page provides news and updates on free trainings and resources for schools
- [@SavetheChildren](#) (Save the Children): This account shares news and information on protecting children from harm

Disaster Preparedness Books for Children

Organization: South Dakota Office of Emergency Management

Website: http://dps.sd.gov/emergency_services/emergency_management/

Audience: Children

Topics: Flooding, General preparedness, Tornadoes, Winter weather

Description: These books feature Tommy the Turtle, who helps children learn how to prepare for floods, tornadoes, and winter weather.

- [Prepare for a Winter Storm in Time...and You Will Be Fine!](#)
- [Tornado Alert...Don't Get Hurt!](#)
- [Rising Water ... Beware and Prepare](#)

CONTACT US

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Disclaimer: The reader recognizes that the federal government provides links and informational data on various disaster preparedness resources and events and does not endorse any non-federal events, entities, organizations, services or products. Please let us know about other events and services related to youth preparedness that could be included in future newsletters by contacting FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov.

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